

## Gordon S. Jessop History



Faculty Picture 2006

Brigham Young University School of Music  
Professor of Music Education 1980-2007  
Interview with Gordon Jessop  
June 12, 2008

***Mike Ohman: When and where did you attend Undergraduate school? Graduate school?***

**Gordon Jessop:** I received my Bachelors degree as well as my Masters degree up in Logan at Utah State University. After that, I received an Educational Specialist degree which is comparable to a Doctorate without a dissertation from the University of Utah. Lastly, I received my PhD in Music with an emphasis in Music Education from BYU in 1976. My primary responsibility was to operate a primary school band. Jim Mason was the president of MENC after I got my PhD in two years and I was taken on part time to help in his absence. I then finished my dissertation and degree program and they hired me on full-time.

***Who were some of your professors while you were at BYU?***

Jim Mason, David Sargent, Tom Matheson (I had five classes from him, he was the resident genius, he had total recall), Hal Goodman, Robert Smith. I also worked a lot with Avery Glenn.

***What were the facilities like? Do you have any stories or memories you want to share?***

We were still in the same building (HFAC) back then. The main change was to the undergraduate program. It was a lot more general back then with 4 credits of music and 4 credits of music education. The philosophy was to merge theory with practice. There was band, strings, orchestra, and theory at that time. I added Music 176 which was a careers and music education class. That class in particular changed the attrition rates down to about 10%. We basically wrote the curriculum for music education.

***When did you begin your employment at BYU? Whom did you replace?***

I began my full-time employment at BYU in 1980, and taught until September 2007. I am not sure whom I replaced; it's a bit of a shell game. I think I was sort of slipped into Hal's (Goodman) spot; however, he did come back after he was a mission president. Prior to BYU, I taught band, choir, and art and was an advisor at Cokeville High as well as in the Weber School District at T.H. Bell following that. Right before coming to BYU I taught at Roy High School for 10 years teaching band and choir.

***Why did you choose BYU?***

I never thought I would end up at BYU, especially since I completed my PHD here. I had the opportunity to work with Newell Weight up at the University of Utah but I didn't feel right about it. That wasn't the experience I wanted to be strong in. I had connections here, so after speaking with Jim Mason, I decided to come down here and work. I also participated in the Golden Spike Music Festival.

***What was the focus of your research/creative work?***

Sight singing program, 5 credit block

***Did you give any public speeches while you were a student, faculty member, etc.? Can you provide copies of these speeches either electronically or hard copy?***

I gave Convocation Remarks in August of 2003. I also gave the Keynote Address for the Trade Secrets Conference in Park City, Utah in June 2007.

***Do you recall names of students who graduated and are now continuing to work in the field?***

Don Peterson (graduate and masters advisor), Paul Broomhead, Rob Dunn, David Fulmer, Patricia Henderson, Don Blackburn.

***What were some of the blessings from working here at BYU?***

Since I taught at public schools before coming to BYU I was used to the notion of separation of church and state. Coming to BYU was very different. I feel there is wisdom in combining both together in a person's educational experience and that is something unique about BYU. Another blessing I noticed was what occurred around campus on Sundays. It was amazing that classrooms became chapels and that I had the opportunity to be a bishop. I enjoyed having the opportunity to give students blessings upon request. Lastly, I would have to say just the caliber of people at BYU was a blessing. Both students and faculty alike were of such high caliber and it added to a great atmosphere.

***What were some of your dreams and goals while you were at BYU?***

I felt that I was supposed to be here at BYU. I believe it is much more difficult here at this school because of the scholarship and exceptions. I am a firm believer in being on the front end of education and showing students what they really need. Also I was all about improving the music education experience. I believe that teaching is all about relationships between students and their teachers. Also, the relationships that students have with the content are important as well. I hope I was able to influence some for good.

***How has technology influenced you in the classroom?***

Technology changed a lot during the time I was teaching. It's a good thing I'm retired, I am so slow with technology. I can use a computer a little bit, but my colleagues will take us where we need to go with the PowerPoint's, and blackboard. Phonographs changed to reel to reel which then in turn changed to cassettes and DVDs. However I am kind of a die hard. I value face to face communication because without those relationships you miss out on things.

***What was the focus of your research while you were here?***

I was kind of a misfit here. I wrote "Pathway to Power" an unpublished book, about 3 dozen choral compositions, mostly ward choir type of stuff, and I also have lots of editorials which talk about everything educational. I've said what I need to say in the editorials. Publishers have to make money, and I have to make music.

***When did you retire, and what have you been doing since then?***

I retired in September 2007. Since then I accidentally tore my shoulder by stepping in a pothole which has been a difficult recovery. I am also an ordinance worker at the Timpanogos Temple every Friday night. I enjoy writing and arranging music as well. I also enjoy traveling, however I have a son that lives with me so that is difficult at times.

***Mike: Since my time at BYU, you and I have shared a lot of history. There are things I remember that you might not. I enjoyed the time I spent with you and your wife. I enjoyed getting to know her when you two would come to our home to record materials for a presentation she was making.***

*You were always in a mood of happiness and had a story or joke to share. Part of being a good teacher is being able to communicate and understand students well. As I've spent the afternoon with you today, I have been reminded how much the students love and respect you. They just kept coming up to you and giving you hugs, and greetings. You have made a great influence here, Gordon.*